

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #464-1

with

Ruth Ishibashi Yamaguchi (RY)

June 19, 1992

Pearl City, O`ahu

BY: Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Ruth Mitsue Ishibashi Yamaguchi at her home in Pearl City, O`ahu, Hawai`i, on June 19, 1992. The interviewer is Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay, for today's interview we're going to concentrate on your family's lives before the war. So I want you to kind of think back. And we can start talking about your mother. What was your mother's name?

RY: My mother's name at that time was Susoe Ishibashi.

MK: And before she got married she was a. . . .

RY: A Fukuyama.

MK: And when and where was she born?

RY: She was born in `Ewa, July 1, 1903.

MK: And, after she was born, tell me about her early life with her family.

RY: Well, as I recall my mother talking about it, she [*mistakenly*] thought she was born in Kuloa, Kaua`i, because she remembers her childhood in Kuloa, Kaua`i. And she had lost her mother when she was very young [*Ruth Yamaguchi's grandmother was forty-one years old at the time of her death.*]. And evidently her father [*Tomosaku Fukuyama*] came back [*to O`ahu*] with her and lived somewhere in Kaka`ako, because she remembers being in this big boardinghouse. And there were other people—she had mentioned some names but I've forgotten who they were now. But she particularly remembered one lady who was very kind to her. Because her father had to go to work, she was left alone most of the time. And when he did come home, she said that he would just feed her and then he would—I guess in those days they used to drink sake, you know, he's gone. So this lady, more or less, watched after her. Then, later on, she told me that her father married this lady. And I think her name was Toyo. I don't know her maiden name, because her mother's name was Tane. Tane Fukuyama. And her stepmother's name was Toyo.

#464- 1

MK: So your mother was raised by her father and stepmother named Toyo.

RY: Yes.

MK: And that was in Kaka`ako.

RY: Yes. But she did also talk about her family. It seems as though her mother told her, when she was small, that in order to come to Hawai`i, trying to better their life, they left Kumamoto[-*ken*]. And, at that time her parents had one son and two sisters [*i.e., daughters*]. But because of the unsure conditions that they heard, and thinking that if they did not want to stay here they would go back to Kumamoto, they left those children with relatives, then came to Hawai`i. So out of four children, she was the only one born in Hawai`i. But her mother never got to see the children again because she had died in Kuloa.

So my mother never got to know her brother or sisters until later in life, through friends that had gone back to Japan and brought word back to her. Then they start [*to correspond with each other*]---now, there was one particular lady, she would write letters for my mother, whatever my mother expressed or wanted to ask. She would take the letter back to Kumamoto to her sisters, and her sisters wrote back again. That's how she got information about the family.

MK: Now, since your mother was raised in Kaka`ako, like how much did she know about Japan or even the Japanese language?

RY: Well, she knew enough Japanese to talk to elderly people. But, of course, her first language was English because she had gone to school, and everything was taught in English. But she did say that she did go to Japanese[-*language*] school and probably because living in a boardinghouse where most of them spoke Japanese, she learned enough Japanese that she could converse with an elderly person.

MK: And then, in terms of her English schooling, would you know what schools she went to in that area?

RY: Oh. There is a school in Kaka`ako she mentioned. I can't remember the name [*Pohukaina School*]. But she did say she did go to the schools there. Probably only up to maybe the seventh grade or so.

MK: And so, as a young girl, would you know if she did any work for pay prior to getting married?

RY: Yes. She did mention that she went to---I think she mentioned she did cannery work. Because I know in the later life when she got married, I remember her mentioning that she had gone to the tuna packers [*Hawaiian Tuna Packers Ltd., formerly MacFarlane Tuna Company*], because she mentioned the smell that was awful. (Chuckles) She could not get over the smell. But I do remember—she might have worked at the cannery even after

she got married [*in 1921*], too—but I do remember her mention how strict they were, you know, in the canneries. And you had to really work fast because the foreladies would come around and check on them.

MK: And when you say “cannery,” that would be the pineapple cannery?

RY: Pineapple cannery. Yeah, pineapple cannery. I can't remember her mentioning which cannery. [*Probably, Hawaiian Pineapple Company or California Packing Corporation.*] You know, in those days there were a lot of canneries there. But I do remember she did have to go to work.

MK: And what do you know about how your mother and father got together?

RY: Well, she told me that there was a man who mentioned my dad [*Wataru Ishibashi*], and that they wanted to take her to meet him. And she didn't go into too much detail about it but she said that she did meet up with my dad. So, I take it that it was probably those go-betweens, you know, in those Japanese custom, yeah? But she said that she did meet up with Dad before she got married. And when I asked her, “Well, what did you think about Dad?”

She said, “Oh, your dad was real handsome.”

(Laughter)

RY: And I asked her, “What did he say to you?” And she said, oh she can't remember, you know. He didn't say much.

(Laughter)

RY: And I said, “Did you get married right away?” She said no, she said then they met a couple more times, you know. I said, “Was the go-between always with you?”

She said, “Of course there was somebody with you all the time.”

(Laughter)

RY: So I take it that even in Hawai`i, they were still strict, you know, the parents were real strict about it. And she remembers that her stepmother was very strict with her. But she thought very highly of her stepmother because even after she got married, and as children I remember going to visit her stepmother in Waipahu. It used to be a treat for us to go there because of the long ride and going there to spend the day. And she was caretaker of a temple, I remember. And so we were able to go around the temples, but she would always take us inside of the temple, you have to pray first, then she would come back. And she always had those goodies.

(Laughter)

RY: Maybe that's why we used to like to go there. I remember you could see

these railroad tracks and you could see the trains passing and that used to be a treat for us, 'cause where we lived in Wailupe, you don't get to see trains or anything. So that was a real treat for us to see those trains in Waipahu.

MK: And so, you know, your mother's stepmother was kind of strict and your mother and father, before they got married, would meet each other, but with someone there. And do you know about when they decided to get married, your mom and dad?

RY: You mean what day they got married?

MK: Mm hmm. The year is fine. What year they got married?

RY: Um, they got married. . . . This would be what, 17th of September? This is 1921, 1921, yeah. Seventeenth of September, 1921. But then we teased Dad a lot after we found out that (Mom's name was different). "You didn't get married to a girl named Susoe." (Upon) visiting different state offices, they said that the clerks (in the old days) weren't sure what they heard, they would write down what they heard. They weren't sure of the spelling of the word so it seemed as though my father got married to a girl named Sumie Fukuyama, which wasn't even my mother's name. So I believe what they say, they wrote down whatever they heard or they didn't check the spelling. But she went by Susoe all the years but then I told them, "Your name wasn't Susoe, it says Sumie." (chuckles) And then later on when she went to look for her birth certificate, she found out she was not Susoe at all—Surie. I remember him teasing her, "Boy, you('re) (a) expensive wife, now I have to go to the lieutenant governor's office to change your name."

MK: So much confusion, yeah.

RY: (Yes), and he had it legally changed. And I remember their checkbooks read Susoe Ishibashi and Wataru Ishibashi. So he said, "Now, I have to get to the bank to change everything." And he kept teasing her that, "Boy, you're real expensive wife."

MK: And I notice, you know in this record of marriage between your father, Wataru Ishibashi, and your mother, it's signed by a pastor or priest of the Shinto temple.

RY: Oh, that's right.

MK: So I guess they were married by a Shinto priest.

RY: I never did ask her where she got married, but I guess so, because their picture, she's in a kimono. And she say in those days usually the female got married in the mother's. . . . In a *montsuki* with the mother's *mon*. And she said that was her *montsuki* with the *mon* on, she said there was a *mon* on it. And this was their wedding picture. And so when we looked at it I said, "Oh, who did all your hairdo and everything?" And I remember she said that there were people in that business, where they fix the bride's hairdo. And she said

that these people who's in business, you go there and they'll fix your hair, and put all the ornaments on and everything. And people would dress her in the kimono because it had to be a certain way, and no way is she able to do it herself. And she remembers her stepmother had someone come and dress her. And I thought she told me that, like this fan that she's carrying, it was a gift of her stepmother. Plus, I think every bride that went into marriage took a *tansu*. And I remember her having that *tansu*, it was a large *tansu*, and she treasured that. Probably because those were the only things that tied her with her parents.

MK: And your father here in his wedding picture is dressed in a western suit.

RY: Yes, yes. She said that was very common. The man would be in western suit, but usually the bride in a Japanese outfit. Until they gradually changed where they went into a western gown. But in her day, she said, they were still getting married in a kimono.

MK: Did your father ever share his memories of how he met your mother and their wedding and everything?

RY: He didn't---he's a typical Japanese man who doesn't talk too much about those things. And when we would ask him, he would say just a few things about meeting my mother but he does not comment, you know, about what he thought. . . . My mother said, "Oh, he was real handsome." (Chuckles) But he never did comment about her. And I guess men, their nature is just a few words, especially Japanese men. So he didn't say too much. So whatever I remember it came mostly from my mother.

MK: And your father, I was wondering, when and where was he born?

RY: He was born April 1, 1903, in Waialua [*to Shojiro and Sei Ishibashi*].

MK: And what do you remember about his family's background?

RY: Well, whatever I remember or know of his family's background is through my *babachan*, his mother. And she lived with us all the time. And she used to tell stories about olden days. So whatever I know, it came from *Babachan*. Like she used to raise chickens. So in order to feed the chickens they couldn't afford just those chicken feed that you buy, she used to supplement it by cutting grass, certain kind of grass. She would mix it in. But in order to cut the grass she has to do a lot of real fine chopping, and so many of us kids, like myself and my other sister, we would have to help, too. And we used to dread it, so we would make sure we would watch the time, more or less about what time she's going to chop the grass. We would try to go away, playing or go away, but you couldn't do that all the time. Being girls, you couldn't do that all the time. So okay, all right, if I'm going to have to chop grass with her, she would sit us down, but then I got to the place where, oh, I didn't mind chopping the grass because *Babachan* had lots of stories to tell you. She had lots of stories to tell you and got to be interesting. Later on I didn't make an effort to just run away from that chore because I would tell her I want to talk stories with you and she would tell me stories.

'Cause I found out when she came to Hawai`i now—she and her husband, now, were not real young people. Like my grandma said she was, I think, in her thirties. Not her thirties when she came, but she was thirty and she was still childless, she didn't have any children. And I remember at one of those chopping sessions she told me that because she didn't have any children she wrote to her sister in Japan to look for a boy child that she could adopt. Because I understand (the) immigrants that were coming to work in Hawai`i, sometimes they brought children for another family. So she wrote to her sister to look for a boy child, that she wants to adopt, knowing that she wasn't able to have any children. And she told me that they found a boy child but then her sister, who did not have any children, took that child and adopted that child herself. And she told me she was very upset and she was very angry at her sister about it. And she thought that, well, she's not going to have any children, probably. But she was so upset about that. She told me how upset(ing) it was and how angry (she was) about that. She told me that I think when she was about thirty-one or thirty-two she finally got pregnant and that was with my father. And she felt that she was very fortunate and I think she told me that her thinking was that she got repaid for what the sister did to her with that child. (Chuckles) And that somehow God gave her the opportunity to get pregnant and she was able to have my father.

MK: And your father Wataru Ishibashi was the only child.

RY: And he was the only child she was able to have.

MK: And, you know, your grandparents, your Ishibashi grandparents, what *ken* did they come from?

RY: They came from Fukuoka prefecture and we had information—Yame-*gun* Hoshino-*mura*, they say that Yame-*gun* would be more or less probably the district in Japan and the Hoshino-*mura* was the village. I found out it was way out in the countryside. I remember Grandma saying that there were a lot of mountains, but it's a small village and it's considered *inaka*. And when she told me that I thought to myself, Grandfather Ishibashi to be able to come out from the *inaka*, you know, to a strange place like this, I felt how brave he must have been in those days to be able to make up his mind to leave his home country to come to a strange place. Because I found documents that he came in 1898 and he had come alone. And my grandma had come later in the 1900s.

MK: And would you know why your grandma and grandpa came out to Hawai`i?

RY: Well, she told me in Japan a lot of people were struggling, and the farmers were being taxed very heavily, but farming was real hard in those days. And if you're a farmer, you had land, but you had to struggle for your everyday living. When they heard that they were taking immigrants to come to Hawai`i to work on plantation, they would hear these fabulous stories about how much money you could make and everything. And I think probably Grandpa Ishibashi decided that he is going to come. But I remember *Babachan* telling me that among the Ishibashi family there were bitter arguments about it. But

I think that if you lived in the *inaka*, people are afraid to venture too far, and to go to Hawai`i, a foreign country. And she did say that the Ishibashi family was against it, against Grandpa Ishibashi leaving Japan to come to a strange place. But I think she told me the other families had children already, but since they did not have children Grandpa Ishibashi thought that, well, he's going to go. And that's how he came to Hawai`i to work for Waialua [Agricultural Company] plantation.

MK: And Grandpa Ishibashi, would you know if he was the first son, second son, third son?

RY: I thought they told me that he was the oldest son. I remember *Babachan* telling me that he was the oldest son and that's why there was so much protest about him going. Because usually, in a Japanese family, the oldest son is very important.

MK: And in those days, did the Ishibashi family own the land that they had in Fukuoka?

RY: *Babachan* told me that they were all farmers and they owned the land. They were farmers, they were poor farmers, but they did have land.

MK: And when your grandfather Ishibashi left Japan, that meant his wife was left there, yeah?

RY: Right, so *Babachan* stayed back. And then *Babachan*---she couldn't remember what year she came and I just didn't have time to go back and check with immigration as to when she had come, but she told me it was in the 1900s. Because she was telling me about the changes that was taking place in Hawai`i. I found out that in 1900s Hawai`i had the first censorship, not the censorship---yeah, the census, they took the first census in 1900. *Babachan* was trying to tell me about---I thought she meant the American Civil War, but then later I found out she is telling me about Hawai`i's overthrow, the kingdom of Hawai`i, where they overthrew Queen Lili`uokalani. And they were, I guess, the first generation, the issei immigrants were witnesses to that overthrow. So she was talking about this battle, the overthrow and everything. I thought she was talking about American history, but later on it came to me that she's talking about the overthrow of the Hawai`i kingdom.

MK: So she came after the overthrow, yeah?

RY: No, my father was born in 1903, and the overthrow was in 1903? Queen Lili`uokalani's . . .

MK: Actually by 1900 Hawai`i was incorporated as a territory of the United States, so when your father's mother came, she came after the overthrow. But the queen was still living.

RY: Yeah, and I think she was [*at one time*] under house arrest at Washington Place. Anyway, she was telling about that, but it turned out to be the

Hawaiian history that she's talking about.

MK: She was really very observant. She knew things.

RY: Yeah, she knew a lot of things and she remembered a lot of things. So it got to be real interesting to talk to *Babachan*. Like she would talk about Japan, how poor they were. And she used to tell me they used to eat *yamaimo* and *mugi*, not rice. And *mugi* is barley, I think. She said only the rich people ate rice.

MK: When she told you about the old times, did she ever share memories of her coming over, the voyage to Hawai'i, or her first impressions of Hawai'i?

RY: She told me that it was a long trip. And it was real hard to come on the ships. It was not a luxury ship. People were just crammed, and a lot of families had children who got sick. She did remember that part, I remember her talking about that. And she said it was not easy. She said she was lucky she was only herself to take care of. She said she remembers a lot of family who had children who got sick and they didn't have enough food. She didn't emphasize too much about the voyage part, but she remembers it was a real hard trip to make, to come over. And she just told me a few things about living in Waialua, where they had this plantation homes. (She said it was really hard work on the plantation and all the families struggled.)

MK: What did she remember about her time in Waialua?

RY: She didn't tell me too much about Waialua. But I do know that since my father was born in Waialua and couldn't remember when she had moved from Waialua. But then Grandpa Ishibashi got a job at Hind-Clarke Dairy, and that they had moved to the Wailupe, the Hind-Clarke Dairy Homestead. [*After working Waialua, the Ishibashis moved to Wailupe where they resided on Judge Antonio Perry's property. Shojiro Ishibashi was a caretaker there. This property later became part of Hind-Clarke Dairy and the Ishibashis continued to reside there as employees of the dairy. See Tr. 22-46-5-92.*]

MK: You know in Waialua, would you remember from your grandmother what kind of work your Grandpa Ishibashi was doing in Waialua?

RY: I thought she said that he worked in the [*sugarcane*] fields. I can't remember now what she had said too much about Waialua, but I thought that he had worked out in the fields, because he was a farmer in Japan and I think his job was to work out in the fields.

MK: And I was wondering, how did it come to be that they ended up in Wailupe at the Hind-Clarke Dairy?

RY: That was the part that I don't remember her telling me anything. How, you know, they got to go to Wailupe. If I talked to my father more he probably would remember, although he's of age now, too, and he doesn't say too much about it.



MK: Did she ever give descriptions of what Wailupe was like when your dad was small?

RY: She said that area was---well, anything outside of the city area was considered rural (chuckles), but not as *inaka* as Waialua. But she said that when they moved to Wailupe it wasn't as *inaka* as Waialua, she remembers. But it was still considered rural. And she said most of the land there was fields, so I take it that my grandfather worked in the Hind-Clarke Dairy fields 'cause they had their own alfalfa fields and a large area was cattle feed. In fact, all of the land in front of the homestead, beyond the road, on one side toward the cliff were the homes. Then there was a road, a junky road, then beyond that was all cultivated for dairy use. And it was mostly alfalfa and all those dairy feed for the cattle.

MK: So you think that your Grandpa Ishibashi was sort of farming alfalfa for the Hind-Clarke Dairy.

RY: I would think so.

MK: And they were residing up there.

RY: Right.

MK: And what was their place called? Was there a name for where your grandpa and grandma Ishibashi settled in Wailupe?

RY: Oh, that was called the Hind-Clarke Dairy Homestead. And it was owned by the Hind-Clarke Dairy.

MK: If you were to tell me where it is now, where was this Hind-Clarke Dairy Homestead?

RY: It was the roadway leading from Kalaniana`ole Highway. Now at the very corner there was a [W. K. "Woody"] Cummins family living on the entrance of the road. And that road had no name, I remember, it had no name. And it was just called Hind-Clarke Dairy Homestead. But at the very entrance, as you face the mountains, there were vacant lots on your right, but the only home at that corner was the Cummins home right at the corner of that road and Kalaniana`ole Highway on your left side, going into that valley.

MK: And when your grandma and grandpa and dad were living there, you know, what other people were there, at the Hind-Clarke Dairy Homestead?

RY: Oh, there were all different families who worked for Hind-Clarke Dairy, like I remember the Oshiro family. All them were not actually Hind-Clarke Dairy employees. There were other people living in that area, they probably rented the homes from the dairy, but they did not work for Hind-Clarke Dairy. But I remember Mr. Oshiro did, and I understand Mr. Tamashiro did. Of course, Mr. Tamashiro later died. And there were another Filipino family and they worked for the Hind-Clarke Dairy. So in between there were families that worked for the dairy and some who did not. Like the Hirata family, I remember, now, Mr.

Hirata ran the school bus. He had this unusually large truck. The back side had long benches and it had railing and he could lower a step for the schoolchildren to go in. And he ran the school bus for that area. And Mr. Hirata would pick up all the children in that homestead, and I remember he making two runs. The second run he would go as far as Kuli`ou`ou, and as far as what is now Lunalilo Home Road to pick up children in that area to take them to school, to Wai`alae School.

MK: And that was like during your time, when you were at school, when you were a schoolchild?

RY: Right, right. 'Cause we went on that school bus to school. And if you missed the first one you had to make sure to be at a certain area so you would catch his second run, which would be a long run into Lunalilo Home Road. So if you wanted the extra ride, you had to be sure to catch him going the other way and then getting the ride and going to school. Otherwise he would pick you up at the very end of his run, going into school.

MK: And so, at the time when your father was still a little boy, the Hiras were there, too? And the other families were there when your father was a little boy?

RY: I would think so, because while he was growing up, I'm sure a lot of the families already lived there. One of our neighbors were the Yamaguchis and they had children all of our age. And they were friends of *Babachan*, and when *Babachan* passed away, my father occasionally went to see (them).

MK: And, you know, I was wondering, did the Hinds live there?

RY: Now the Hinds lived---they had their own homes, these large homes, beautiful homes in those days, on Kalaniana`ole Highway. And Hind-Clarke Dairy had this drive-in where they had their own ice cream parlor [*Hind-Clarke Drive Inn*]. And later on it got to be known as M's Ranch House. Until only recently it was still there, and they finally closed down. But it started out as a Hind-Clarke Dairy ice cream parlor, but people drove in there to buy ice cream. 'Cause I know my sister had a job there, my older sister.

MK: So the Hind's family did live in that area, though, they lived on Kalaniana`ole?

RY: I do remember the son of Mr. [*Robert*] Hind, Robson Hind. He lived in the large home and I heard that was his family home.

MK: I was wondering, when we've studied plantation areas, there was a big difference between the plantation management and the homes they had and what the workers had. How did the workers' families' homes compare with the Hinds' homes? What did your grandma and grandpa Ishibashi house look like way back then?

RY: Well, the original house was not bad. It was large, with a large porch, but of course, Grandpa Ishibashi, I understand, added part of the home, so it was

#464- 10

an add-on to the original home. But as I remember, many of the homes were not that bad homes. Like the home that Yamaguchi lived in, it was two-story home. And of course, each family, I take it as the family increased, they added their own. So naturally, there would be portion of a nice-looking home, then there would be portion of an add-on (chuckles) that was not that nice, like Grandpa Ishibashi's home. He kept adding on. And I take it that like most of those families, especially the Japanese families, they wanted a *furoba*. So I remember that portion was an add-on. And I used to protest sometimes, I think, to the girls in my family—my sisters, you know—that the *furoba* area had wide gaps in the wall and that somebody might look through and we didn't want to undress.

(Laughter)

RY: So I know that was add-ons, because it didn't look as nice as the original part of the homes.

MK: And there was indoor plumbing?

RY: Oh yes.

MK: That was during your grandpa and grandma Ishibashi's time or your time?

RY: Yes, I take it, it was there, the plumbing was there and . . .

RY: I remember the *furoba* because almost all of the homes had either adjoining or away from the home, they made the *furo*. And every family, I remember, used to burn wood to make the hot water. And Grandma would be very strict and we had to take turns cleaning out all the ashes, and you had to make sure that the wood was there to burn the hot water. But then it was one of those *furo* where you wash yourself and you could just soak yourself. I thought it was a redwood tub.

MK: Sounds real comfortable.

RY: It was. In those days we didn't think too much about it. "Oh, how come we don't have a bathtub?" You know how kids are. And we would constantly grumble, "Why don't we have a regular bathroom where the tile and everything else is there? And get a bathtub." But it was one of those *furo* things. You just went in and soaked up to your neck. And I guess as a child you don't treasure those things until you lose it. Then you think about it and you wish you had one of those *furos*.

MK: Each of the Japanese families would have that type of *furoba*?

RY: I would think so. I remember most of them having a *furo*, either adjoining to the garage or somewhere in their home. I take it that almost all the families

#464- 11

had a *furo* that they used wood to burn.

MK: And you had a kitchen?

RY: Yes, yes, yes. We had a kitchen with plumbing and everything else. In fact, now the kitchen area, I remember, there was a sink, the plumbing, and on the other side of the wall we had the table to eat. But then on the add-on, now, on the add-on side, I remember one of those stoves that you can burn wood, because my grandma, *Babachan* had one of those old rice cookers that she brought from Japan that had an outer lip in the center of the pot. You had to put this wooden cover on it with two handles. And we cooked rice that way. And they also had a kerosene stove. They had a kerosene stove that you did cooking on. But that was on add-on side. But my mother's refrigerator, that she treasured, was right next to the table in the regular kitchen side.

MK: And that refrigerator was the old type with the engine on top?

RY: That was the old type, with the engine on the top, that round circular motor. But I do remember us having that old-fashioned icebox, too. Because I remember my dad bringing home ice, that you had to put ice, I think, in the inside. You have to make sure the pan was there to catch all the dripping water. I remember that, but later on I don't know what happened to it, after they got the new one. I can't remember what happened to the old one, whether it was given to somebody else or. . . . But I don't remember having it around the house anymore, so it might have been given away for someone else to use.

MK: I take it that, after your mom and dad got married and you were all born, you folks lived in the house that was originally *Babachan's* and Grandpa Ishibashi's house, yeah?

RY: Ishibashi, yes. And I remember *Babachan* saying that the Hind-Clarke Dairy owners told her and Grandpa Ishibashi that as long as there was an Ishibashi living that you could stay there. You know, in those days it was like a gentlemen's agreement among employer, employee, and that you can stay there as long as you're living. Or like my dad started to work for the dairy, so I take it that we were going to still live there.

MK: And you know, you were saying that your grandpa Ishibashi probably helped farm the alfalfa. And when he was working for the dairy, your dad was growing up. What school did your dad go to?

RY: Oh, he mentioned some school, uh, I don't think it was Wai`alae School. But he did mention going to school. I remember him saying it was hard because his parents spoke Japanese, but luckily he had a lot of friends who spoke English. And he learned English real fast that way, even though his parents were immigrants. But *Babachan*, I give her a lot of credit. She knew a lot of Pidgin English, enough to understand if we used pidgin. And she learned a lot of Hawaiian words, because she said that there were a lot of Hawaiian people and they got to be friends with the elder Hawaiians, and you had to learn

#464- 12

what they were talking about. And she learned a lot of Hawaiian that way. But while growing up we couldn't distinguish Hawaiian from Japanese, so we mixed everything up. And you find out the hard way, like when you went to Japanese[-*language*] school where the teacher says that is not *Nihongo*. But for you it is because *Babachan* used it. And you argued your point, but then when you went home, half crying to *Babachan*, "The *sensei* said this."

She said, "Oh, *are wa* Hawaiian *dakara*" ("Oh, because that's Hawaiian").

"But *Babachan*, you use it."

But she says, "Hawaiian *da*, *Nihongo de wa nai*" ("It's Hawaiian, not Japanese").

So for us it was a struggle. Distinguishing which is Japanese, which is Hawaiian because *Babachan* used it constantly in her speech to us.

MK: So I guess your dad also became acquainted with that when he was a boy.

RY: (Yes) right. So he knew a lot of Hawaiian words, too. And I would hear Grandma using—she would meet a Hawaiian person—"Pehea `oe." And you would think oh, Japanese, but then it got to be where it wasn't Japanese at all. It was in Hawaiian, she's asking them how they were. For us, we did not care what language it was or it didn't matter to us. It was, "Oh, she's Japanese, she must. . . ." We didn't even stop to think, in our days, oh, she's talking to a Hawaiian, she couldn't be using Japanese. But then for us we think that everybody spoke all those languages. And it was unimportant to us, in those days, what language it was.

MK: So going back to your dad's time, he had people who spoke English, he had friends who spoke Hawaiian, or knew families where they were still speaking Hawaiian. Did he ever tell you or did your *Babachan* tell you about your dad's childhood? What was his childhood like in that area?

RY: *Babachan* kept telling me about my father, but it was mostly how much she treasured that boy. She said having that child at an older age and to think that she knew she couldn't have a child and here she was able to have my father. She kept telling me how precious that child got to be. She used to always use a Japanese word that he was the family treasure like a family *takara*?

MK: Treasure. *Takara-mono*.

RY: Yeah, she kept using that word, *takara-mono*. Yeah, *takara-mono*. That he is the Ishibashi's *takara-mono*. Later on I found out, oh, that word is a "treasure." So she treasured my father. And she used to tell me, whatever he wanted, what was that word that she kept using? There was nothing that she would not get for him.

MK: She wouldn't deprive him of anything.

RY: Right, right.

MK: Were your grandpa and *Babachan* able to give your dad the things that he wanted? I was wondering, how well were they doing?

RY: I would think, because they were immigrants, too they were not wealthy. But there was a picture of my father with a horse. A horse. I said, "Oh, Dad, whose horse is that?"

"Oh, my horse."

I said, "What do you mean, your horse?"

"That was my horse."

And I remember asking *Babachan*, "How come he had a horse?" They bought him a horse so he could ride the horse to wherever he want to go. So I take it that although they were poor, they did well enough that they would buy him a horse. But there were a lot of stories---I never got to know my grandfather, he died right after the second girl in the family was born. He was able to name her, my sister(s) (were) named by my grandfather, but he had died after that. So by the time I was born Grandpa Ishibashi was not around. But then I heard enough stories about Grandpa Ishibashi from my mother and some from my *Babachan*.

MK: What did you hear about your Grandpa Ishibashi?

RY: My mother, now, tells me about my grandfather that I never knew. That when she married into the Ishibashi family, that Grandpa Ishibashi treated her like his own daughter. And in a Japanese family, the mother-in-law was the head of the family like, besides the father-in-law, and she had the last say. And daughter-in-laws were looked down upon, I understand, even in Japan. And my grandmother being the issei, I take it that she had the same habits or traits or customs, whatever it was, that my mother was—like in Japan—the daughter-in-law was there to serve the family. But my mother tells me her father-in-law never treated her that way. That she used to be treated equally. And whenever there were arguments in the family, my father-in-law always took part for her and watched out for her. She also told me that Grandpa Ishibashi was one of those—you hear is one of those people who give their shirts away to somebody. Grandpa Ishibashi was like that. But he loved his drinking. And he would come home, but somehow no matter how drunk he was, after drinking with his friends, he always came home and he was in a very jolly mood. He was not the violent man. He was always happy-go-lucky.

And my mother said one day there was a big commotion because he actually came home without his shirt. I said, "What do you mean, Mama?"

It seemed as though somebody's shirt either got stolen or lost and that man didn't dare go home without a shirt. And so Grandpa Ishibashi gave his shirt to save that man and came home without his shirt. And there was a big

argument between *Babachan* and *Jichan* because he gave his shirt away. And I thought to myself, “Oh, that saying is true, even as far back as then.” But my mother said that he actually gave his shirt away and he came home without his shirt. And that caused a big argument in the family with *Babachan*, because *Babachan* was more thrifty, whereas *Jichan* would, if you didn't watch it, he would give everything away. (When he) came home, there was no way to check his money, but she said she knew that he gave a lot of his money away. I said, “Because he was drunk?”

She said, “Well, partly because of that and partly because he would hear sad stories, hard luck stories, and he would give the money away.”

So in my young age I got the impression that, oh, Grandpa and Grandma were really opposite from the stories I would hear. Because *Babachan* was really thrifty. She would tell us not to waste and she would save scraps of cloth and things. To this day I think a couple of the members in my family actually have her quilts. And she hand-quilted all those quilts.

MK: She was very thrifty and he was kind of . . .

RY: Happy-go-lucky.

MK: And generous.

RY: And generous, gave things away.

MK: I was wondering, on the plantations I know that if an employee lived on plantation grounds, they would have a plantation house and they had to pay no rent. But I was wondering, how about out in Wailupe? Would you know if Grandpa and Grandma Ishibashi had to pay any rent for the house that they lived in? I was curious about . . .

RY: The way I heard it now—as I remember the story—as long as you were an employee of the dairy, you did not have to pay rent. But if you were there in one of their homes and was not an employee, I understand they paid a very low rent for it. I understand the owners of the dairy were very generous, and their rent was very low.

MK: I was wondering, the plantation in the old days used to supply kerosene to the workers. But say about the dairy, did they supply meat . . .

RY: No, they . . .

MK: . . . or milk or cheese?

RY: I know my dad was able to---the dairy supplied whatever milk they needed. I remember we always had butter, rich butter, rich cream, and cheese. I remember we were brought up on cottage cheese. And my mother used to love cottage cheese. And I thought that cottage cheese was everybody's food. That's how ignorant I was about that, that I thought everybody ate cottage cheese. I remember the cottage cheese mostly, we were brought up

#464- 15

on cottage cheese, milk and things. So naturally we had cream for our cereal, not milk, pure cream. That's why to this day I always remind my father, "That's why, Dad, our whole family had high cholesterol." (Chuckles) It runs in the family, all of us had high cholesterol. "Dad, it's your fault because you fed us rich cream, rich butter." We had butter to put on our toast, we had butter to butter our sandwiches. So I do know that the dairy provided for the workers.

MK: How about meat? Did the dairy ever slaughter their livestock and distribute meat?

RY: I never did hear about the meat part. It was always the milk, cheese, whatever cheese you wanted, and all those things. But not meat because I remember my mother buying meat. My grandmother, because she raised chickens we had chickens. We provided our own chicken, eggs, we had all the eggs. That's another high cholesterol.

(Laughter)

RY: We had all the eggs we wanted to eat. We had eggs in every form, in any kind of omelette you could think of. And *Babachan* used to feed us chive omelette. I used to get so sick of it and now it's a gourmet food. (Chuckles) Yeah, but I used to get so sick of it, chive omelette, onion omelette, green onion omelette. Then because, I guess, we would grumble so much, she would mix some other things in it. I remember her mixing tuna in it and sardines in it, trying to fool us that it was something else. (Chuckles) Yeah.

MK: When it comes to food, the dairy would provide dairy goods, your grandmother had chickens . . .

RY: We had lots of eggs and she grew a lot of vegetables.

MK: How about if you needed something from the store? Where did your *babachan* go for store- bought goods?

RY: Well, I don't know about my grandma but by the time I was born my mother used to order through the stores. Like things like toilet paper. In those days I guess you didn't need too much, as long as you had enough food. But she used to buy toothbrushes, toothpaste. Those things, she used to buy at the store. There used to be a Wai`alae Store.

MK: Where was that?

RY: It was at the corner of Wai`alae Avenue and `O`ili Road. There was a large store. Now I forget what family owned it, but it used to be called the Wai`alae Store. And they had anything from toothbrush, soap, everything else. And they also had a meat counter, I remember, in the back they had the meat counter. And my mother used to buy meat from them.

MK: How about dry goods like fabric?



RY: Oh, now where did she used to buy? I think they used to have the dry goods, too. I remember on one side of the wall, yeah, I think they would have certain amount, a selected amount of dry goods.

MK: With clothes and everything?

RY: Not mostly clothes, but material and threads and things. And I remember as soon as my oldest sister was able to go to sewing school, she went to sewing school because she have to sew for the family. And because she have to give up her summer vacation to go to sewing school to sew for the family, I remember, she used to protest because she has to give up her summer fun, right. It's just like going to work, going to summer school, I mean sewing school to sew for everybody, while we get to play.

And I remember that, so then my father made it, "That's right, she's doing all the work, so you folks will have to help with the laundry, help with the housework and everything else." And she didn't need to do it. He said, "That's fair enough."

But then when we---kids will be kids, I don't care what. So we used to grumble among ourselves that we had to do her laundry. But not realizing that she's sewing our clothes to go to school. But that's kids, you don't reason the other half, what the other person's doing. I remember I used to grumble, "How come we have to do all the housework? How come we have to wash your clothes?"

MK: That's really interesting. At least in your generation you had sisters and brothers, yeah? But your dad's generation, he was the only child and I guess during his time family life was just him and his mom and his dad, yeah?

RY: And his dad.

MK: And before I forget to ask this question, I was wondering, what kind of work did the other employees of Hind-Clarke Dairy do?

RY: Oh, the employees there?

MK: Yeah, of Hind-Clarke Dairy. You had your grandfather that took care of the alfalfa. How about his contemporaries? What kind of work were they doing at the dairy?

RY: As I remember now, the owners were like I say, very generous. Lot of times, the children in the neighborhood go to the dairy. And I remember where the milk was being processed, it's all enclosed with glass. Big building with all this machinery going on. But the building itself was closed up with glass and we would watch, stand outside and watch all the milk bottles coming down on this belt and being filled. So each building had all different functions going on. Across the building, I remember, was an office where there were office workers. And my sister in her later years got a job in the office there. And so there would be different plants going on and sometimes they would let us go to the area where the cows were being washed. You know, they were given a

#464- 17

bath before they're gonna be milked. Before the machinery came in, I remember there would be men sitting and milking the cows. There were pastures, all enclosed, and that's where all the cows were kept. And in the back of the pastures were another row of houses, because Mrs. [*Marjorie Tomoe*] Fukamoto was the cook for all the bachelors that lived there. There were houses there. And each house had so many bachelors. And Mrs. Fukamoto used to do the cooking and she used to do the laundry for the bachelors, while Mr. [*Jitsutaro*] Fukamoto was the foreman to take care of the cattle, I remember, the cows, yeah. Some of the jobs were—and they were Filipino workers, too—they would go and feed the cattle. Put the feed in the trough. And some of them, their job was to wash down the cows. And I remember watching them wash the cows and they used to say that they're gonna give the cow a shower or a bath. And I thought, “What do they mean, give them a bath or shower?” And that's when I found out, “Oh, they actually wash the cows first.” Especially the milking area, underneath, they have to wash them down before they milk them.

MK: Hand-milking.

RY: And later on, I remember, they brought in machineries where the cows would go through this area and the water would come down on them, and shoot on them. And each cow passing through got washed that way. And then later on they got those machinery where they put the suction on to the nipples, and the machine, yeah. So it was a big dairy. But like I said we were allowed to go and watch. But you couldn't go into the plant because it's closed for sanitation. But I remember sitting out there, all of us kids lined up against the wall of the windows, all watching.

MK: And like your dad . . .

RY: And they had a fleet of trucks, milk trucks. And like my father would go and deliver. They would load up, they would have people loading up. And he had to know his route. He would know his route, where to go and deliver milk.

MK: So when your dad became of age to be employed at Hind-Clarke Dairy, what was his job?

RY: Milkman.

MK: Milkman. By milkman you mean . . .

RY: He would go and deliver. He would drive the truck with other drivers and they would divide the sections, where to go and deliver. And I remember some of them used to go and deliver to schools. Now if you were an employee of the [*dairy*], the dairy sent this truck, your milk was separated and had special arrangement with the school that your milk was in this section of the icebox. And we didn't have to stand in line to pay for it, we just walked into the kitchen, opened the door, and took your milk out. That was if the dairy provided your milk. So you don't go through the regular procedure of having your nickel ready to pay for it and get your milk.

But like any other children, there's always something. We went home and grumbled to my dad, "No, Dad, we rather have five cents and buy the regular milk, because the other kids get a piece of graham cracker." They got a piece of graham cracker with their milk. And so we went home and grumbled, "But when we get our milk, there's no cracker for us." Because the school is not doing it under the school system. The dairy is providing your milk so you go and pick up your milk. So you don't have a piece of cracker to go with it.

So then my dad said, "All right, stop your grumbling." Told my mother to buy graham cracker. "Here, each day you take your graham cracker."

(Laughter)

MK: Good solution.

RY: But when you're a kid, even a piece of graham cracker is so important. And you're different from the other kids because your milk is different and you don't get a cracker and you don't stand in line. Somehow you get identified, you know. Mom would say, "All right, here's your graham cracker. Take your graham cracker with you." But that's how selfish we were and how important those little things got to be.

MK: But you were only children.

RY: And when you grow up and you think about it, you can laugh about it. But those are the small little things that are so important to a child. It's amazing.

MK: So your dad used to go and deliver particular routes, set routes or . . .

RY: Yeah, set routes. And I remember he delivered, I think, in the Manoa, Nu`uanu area. And it was all those homes where the Cooke family lived, all those well-known people. I remember he said that when you delivered in those rich areas, at Christmastime they were very generous, even to the milkman. You know, at Christmastime. He said one day this lady—I forgot what family—left just a pack of cigarettes for him. When he opened it up it was just a pack of cigarettes, and he said, "Oh, it's just a pack of cigarettes, and I don't even smoke." He said he was going to throw it away. And he got curious. "Why just a pack of cigarettes?" But on the back side of the cigarettes, there was a ten-dollar bill. And so he said---in those days ten dollars was big money, that was big money. But he said usually those rich families were very generous, even to the milkman delivering, they left a Christmas gift of some kind.

MK: What kind of Christmas gifts would he get from the other families?

RY: He used to tell me that some of the other families left a box of handkerchief, all different things. Some would leave a box of candy. So depending on the family he got all different kinds of. . . . But he said a lot of them left envelopes with a Christmas card and there's usually money in it, five dollars or ten dollars.

MK: And did he get to know any of these pretty wealthy people living in Manoa and Nu`uanu? Would they talk to him or something when he came?

RY: He said usually no, because usually they deliver to kitchen, the back side. If he got to see anybody, it was the cook of the family or the maid of the family. So he got to see the cook or the maid or the yardman or somebody. One of the servants of the rich family, but never the owners. He said, but once in a while he would meet up with them. I remember him saying that they were very nice.

MK: I was wondering, how much money do you think he made as a milkman? Was it okay or was it little? Did you have any indication?

RY: I don't really know how much he used to make as a milkman. I never thought about that, I never thought about that. And I really don't know how much he made as a milkman.

MK: You know, I was wondering, when he was a milkman, how big was your family already?

RY: Up until that time that we left—Kent was born while we were still there, so there were seven children.

MK: And that would be like---tell me when all your sisters and brothers were born approximately? You're the third one, yeah?

RY: I'm the third one [*after sisters, Gladys and Helen*] and I was born in 1927. Then the next one, Richard, is '29. And there were some gaps, one was '34, I remember. Of course, the youngest one, Kent, was born in 1941, August '41. But then Tom was born in 1930s. He must have been about three years [*earlier*] than Kent. So it's anywhere from nineteen. . . . I think my oldest sister [*Gladys*] is '24, 1924 or '23, probably '23.

MK: So quite a few of you to support, yeah?

RY: Yeah. And yet I remember, he always had schoolbooks and pencils and everything for us, for school. I never gave it a thought. I guess when you're young, you don't think about those things. And we always had new dresses to go to school. And before school started, we were all taken down to the store to buy new shoes. And a lot of times, my dad was a believer in that Sears [*Roebuck and Company*] catalog. And he ordered a lot of things through the Sears catalog before school started. 'Cause I remember, in my days, I don't know whether you heard about it, they used to call it the saddler, the shoes.

MK: Oh, saddle shoes?

RY: Yes, yes. Either black and white or brown and white. And that was the fad. And he ordered one for us through the catalog. And as much as we hated school we wanted to start school because we wanted to wear the shoes to show off.

(Laughter)

RY: 'Cause that was the fad. One year it got to be a fad. And I could hardly wait. Then I remember one year, Sears catalog came out with this---the first, they call it. . . . It's a plastic raincoat and he ordered the raincoat for us. And we wished that it would rain, we wished it would rain so we could show off our raincoats. Because nobody had those raincoats, you know. And would you believe it, it wouldn't rain, you know. And all those kids wanted to know, "Why you carrying that when it's not raining?" It was just to show off the raincoat. (Laughs) But you could get that only through Sears. So my dad saw it and he ordered it for us. It had a raincoat and, I remember, a rain cap so you wouldn't get wet. But when you recall those things it's so funny now. (Chuckles)

MK: Yeah, I guess, yeah, you want to show off your new things especially if because no one else has it, yeah.

RY: Yeah, really. And my mother would say, "Why are you taking that? It's not even raining."

"Well, Mama, it might rain in the afternoon. I hope it rains in the afternoon." (Laughs)

And she used to say, "No, leave it home, it's not even raining."

Okay, I remember one day, she said, "No, leave it home." Sure enough, after school it rained, and I was so angry. (Laughs) I didn't have my raincoat with me, and it rained. And those are the things that you recall. You laugh about it now.

MK: You mentioned that you folks were going to school. What school did you go to?

RY: We went to Wai`alae School. It's still existing there.

MK: Same location?

RY: Same location [*Nineteenth and Harding avenues*].

MK: And what grade did you go up to there at Wai`alae?

RY: Up to the sixth grade. And from there, seventh grade, Lili`uokalani [*in Kaimuki*] used to be the intermediate school. But as the population grew and the student increase, they had to break it up and they got to use only that for the seventh graders. The eighth and ninth graders had to go down to Kaimuki, Kaimuki School. And that got to be the Kaimuki Intermediate School. But that was before it got to be---no, it's still an intermediate school. It only broke up that one grade. But now, I understand, all of them is there, at that one location because that building, Lili`uokalani School, is being used, I think, for special [*education*] students or something. Or either for

#464- 21

handicapped students or something.

MK: I was wondering, what memories you have of going to Wai`alae Elementary School? You were mentioning how that bus Mr. Hirata had would take you folks to school. What other special memories do you have about Wai`alae School and the children that went there with you?

RY: Most of the children, I remember, most of us were Japanese. I guess because by the areas, you know, it would be more Japanese families. Because there was an Ali`iolani School where a lot of the *Haole* kids went to. Because in those days that was like an English standard school, and it was different from a regular school. And most of the *Haole* kids went there. Or some of the richer children of rich families went there. So there was a mixture of students at Wai`alae School. Some Hawaiian kids, Portuguese, Chinese, but I think most of the Japanese families sent their kids to a regular public school. So that's why I remember more of us being Japanese, because the area, now, Wailupe, Wai`alae area was noted as a Japanese community. The `O`ili Road, upper 'O`ili, lower `O`ili and there was a Kapakahi Street, they were all Japanese families.

MK: What kind of work did most of these families do? Like your family was at a dairy. How about all these other Wai`alae Japanese?

RY: Oh, I know a lot of them were farmers.

MK: They had their own truck farms?

RY: A lot of them were farmers. And lot of them in `O`ili Road and Kapakahi used to be pig farmers. A lot of them were either vegetable farmers or pig farmers or chicken farmers. And there was another dairy.

MK: Is that Costa?

RY: No, used to be called, I think, Wai`alae Nui Dairy. And it was. . . .

MK: This is the continuation of the interview with Mrs. Ruth Yamaguchi at her home on June 19, 1992. The interviewer is Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

We were just talking about the Wai`alae Nui Dairy.

RY: I would think it was located in the area where the golf course is now. The Wai`alae [*Country Club*] Golf Course. I remember there used to be a road going down, way down toward the seaside, and there used to be another dairy there. And there were acres and acres of their field for the cattle. So a lot of the families that worked for that dairy, the children also came to Wai`alae School. Plus the families in the Kaimuki area.

MK: Then you mentioned it was primarily, you had a lot of Japanese but how about Hawaiians, Chinese, Portuguese?

- RY: In my classroom, I remember we had Portuguese children, some Chinese, Hawaiian.
- MK: Would you know what their families were doing?
- RY: I really don't know what their families were doing. I remember one boy's family had a store, this Chinese boy, his family had a store somewhere in Kaimuki. And couple of the Portuguese children, I think their fathers worked for what was the City and County [*of Honolulu*], or whatever it was called at that time. But the Hawaiian families, I can't remember what the Hawaiian families used to do. 'Cause they might have been working, some for the other dairy, but I didn't get to know too many Filipino children. There was one Filipino neighbor, and their father worked for dairy also. But those children were either---one was in my sister's class and the older one was, I think, in my older sister's class.
- MK: And then you know at school, did you and your sisters and brothers mix a lot with the other kids? Was it mostly playing with Japanese kids or was it mixing a lot with different kids?
- RY: For us some of the Japanese children stayed with their own group. It was like any community, they seemed to be sort of a clannish friendship. And those kids in that area played together. My father was a type that had all kinds of friends. He had Chinese friends, he had very good Chinese friends. There were some that were real good Filipino friends, plus some *Haole* guys. So we didn't distinguish food. Only later in our life did we find out we were eating Filipino food, okay, or something Hawaiian or something Chinese. But when you kids, food is food, you didn't distinguish the different dishes, not like now. So we never knew what kind of food (we were eating). But later on we found out, that wasn't Japanese food, that was Filipino food. I said, "How come we got to eat Filipino food." It was because my father's Filipino friend brought it over or gave it to him. But because we used to mingle with so many different nationalities, I didn't think anything about playing with different kids. But like I said, the Japanese tended to play more with Japanese kids. And because they weren't too many other nationalities, it was natural that you got to play with your own nationality. But sometime of course, when you play as a group, all the children were all mixed, so you would play with anybody.
- MK: And then I was wondering, in Wailupe, like you said your dad had a lot of friends that were not Japanese, yeah? You folks mixed. I know that in some communities where there are quite a few Japanese, they had special Japanese things like *Tencho-setsu* or *Oshogatsu* or Boys' Day, Girls' Day. Did you folks do that kind of stuff?
- RY: I remember *Oshogatsu* now. My grandma made sure that she's going to cook a big pot of *ozoni*. Only in my later life was I to find out that with different *ken* you had different kinds of *ozoni*. I have an interesting story about the *ozoni*. But anyway, she used to always make *ozoni*. And in those days every family made a lot of food, a lot of food. And when New Year's came you got to wear, each family had each child's kimono. And we got to dress in those

kimonos. And you were allowed to go and visit as far as you wanted to go within the valley, in the homestead. You went to greet everybody. *Babachan* would make sure you have to bow your head and greet them. It was something about the New Year greeting, "*Omedeto gozaimasu.*" And she used to teach you to be sure to say that. And other kids and other families came to your home and sat down to eat and drink and they would continue on to another family. That part I remember of *Oshogatsu*. And they would put *mochi* [for decorative and auspicious purposes]. My grandma made sure that the *mochi* was in my father's car and there was [a set of *mochi*] on the refrigerator—the refrigerator was very important—and the stove. And if you had a *butsudan*, they were sure to put one in the *butsudan*. But New Year's was a real joyful time when you got to wear those kimonos, where you got to go visiting all your friends. You can go into any house. And any of the homes were open to you.

MK: How about, like you mentioned, Kuakini Cummins, your neighbor. Did they participate in this kind of thing, too?

RY: Well, Mrs. [*Emma Hind*] Cummins was [a] Hind daughter and she used to come over to our house. She used to come over and eat the food. And Kuakini Cummins, oh yeah, anything Japanese, he's going to find every excuse to come to our house because he wants my mother to put shoyu on his rice. He wasn't allowed that at home, I found out. He would make any kind of excuse just to come over and, "Mrs. Ishibashi, can you put shoyu on my rice." Sometimes I remember he and I would argue—children can be mean—I said, "Why don't you go home and eat at home."

"But I told you I don't have rice and shoyu at home."

And my mother would say, "Don't say such mean things. Let him eat."

And that was his favorite, that shoyu and rice. And because that wasn't served at home, he would find any excuse to come over. And sometimes Mrs. Cummins would send (the) maid, Nancy, to bring the boy back home. 'Cause he wouldn't go home. I would tell him, "You better go home, now." My mother would tell him, "Kuakini, it's late, you better go home. Nancy's looking for you."

"No, no, no, she's not." Every excuse.

MK: (Chuckles) He enjoyed it at your house?

RY: Yeah, he used to really enjoy (it). But then he had this fabulous collection. He had this fabulous collection of comics. And naturally, my sisters and my brothers would say, "Go visit Kuakini and he's gonna lend you." He would always say, "Oh, if she comes to my house and play I will lend you folks the comics."

Oh, they would talk me into going over there. "Go, go with Kuakini, he wants you to go over to his. . . . If you play with him he's gonna lend you those comics."



"Okay." They would talk me into it. So I would go, play games, or you know, listen to the radio, read comics with Kuakini. "Okay Kuakini, I have to go home now."

"No, you didn't stay long enough."

"Okay." And sometimes he would tell their maid, Nancy, "We want to have lunch."

"Oh, is it lunchtime, I have to go home."

"No, you're not going to go home for lunch. You have to stay here for lunch."

MK: Oh, my goodness.

RY: So, I end up having lunch. "Okay, I have to go home, now. You promised after lunch I can go home."

"Okay."

But he was smart, he would just lend me only so much comic, so that I would have to come back again if I needed some more comics.

MK: Oh my goodness.

RY: But then . . .

(Telephone rings.)

RY: . . . but then he was good too.

END OF INTERVIEW